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ABSTRACT

The sociodemographic and socioeconomic characteristics of all Asian American communities since 1950 have been greatly influenced by federal immigration legislation, and it is not possible to consider the field of Asian American studies without an understanding of the history of immigration legislation. Asian American research may be divided into five periods: (1) the early era before World War I; (2) the period of World War II, with the preponderance of Japanese studies; (3) the postwar era, with its emphasis on culture and personality studies; (4) a shift toward ethnic studies as a result of the civil rights movement; and (5) the emergence of a new generation of Asian American studies in the 1980s. The new studies of the 1980s and 1990s are beginning to counter the myth of Asian Americans as a model minority as they address a wide spectrum of topics not previously studied. While rigorous and systematic studies of Asian Americans are still in their infancy, a solid beginning has been made with the recognition of Asian American studies as an academic field and a vital area for research. (Contains 84 references.) (SLD)

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